

unskilled adults who will find it difficult to resist the pull of gravity of illegitimate economic opportunities and the fast track to prison.

At least 3,000,000,000 souls are living on less than US\$2.50 each day and approximately 1,000,000,000 children are living in poverty – many of whom are boys. Boys born into impoverished families are unable to attend school because the cost of textbooks and school supplies exceed the family's monthly or annual income. The International Labour Organization which is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland estimates that approximately 1,199,400,000 children are engaged in child labor. It further estimates that 786,600,000 of the 1,199,400,000 young souls engaged in child labor are boys. There are between approximately 300,000 to 500,000 child soldiers – children as young as 7 years old – who are recruited to serve in armed militias – children who are witness to and participants in atrocious acts of brutality and deadly violence. Approximately 60% of the souls forced to serve as child soldiers are boys. The United Nations' most recent "*Children And Armed Conflict Report*" monitored the violation of children's rights in 20 nations that are engulfed in bloody conflicts. These nations employ the services of children as soldiers, suicide bombers, spies, and messengers. Verified cases of recruitment and employment of children as soldiers in nations which include, but are not limited to, Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo appear in the report. Since 2017, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund has helped more than 8,700 children – many of whom are boys -- who served as child soldiers and were released from armed groups that engaged their services to reintegrate into civilian life and find and reunite with their families.

World Day Of The Boy Child serves as a platform for individuals, organizations, and institutions to improve the manner in which we protect our boys and reclaim our heritage.

How?

Global and Regional Coordinators for World Day Of The Boy Child are offering a few suggestions:

- *Rewrite the narrative on strength and masculinity by equating strength with vulnerability.*
- *Facilitate and moderate Global and National Town Halls which serve as venues for boys and adolescent males to engage in a "straight-no chaser dialogue" to express to key stakeholders what they need and want to safely and successfully navigate the arduous journey from boyhood to manhood. The key stakeholders with whom boys and adolescent young males would engage in discussions include educators, school administrators, law enforcement professionals, legal professionals, health care professionals and providers, social services professionals and providers, parents, legislators, business leaders, and Fatherhood and Men's Issues advocates and practitioners. Global and National Town Hall Meetings would also serve as a venue for boys and adolescent males to co-design and co-monitor -- with key stakeholders -- initiatives that provide*